



## Elián's family lashes out at INS

BY ALEX VEIGA  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIAMI — With a government deadline fast approaching, Elián González's Miami relatives Tuesday continued to resist demands that they promise in writing to surrender the boy if they lose their court fight to keep him in the country.

Lawyers for the family and the U.S. government met in the morning without resolving the impasse, despite threats from immigration authorities to remove the 6-year-old Cuban boy.

"They said, 'If you don't sign the paper, we remove Elián.' They don't tell us how," family spokesman Armando Gutierrez said.

Late Monday, the Immigration and Naturalization Service warned that Elián's temporary permission to stay in the United States would be revoked at 9 a.m. Thursday unless the relatives provide the written guarantee.

Gutierrez said the "blanket statement" that the

INS is demanding is "not the American way." He said Elián's great-uncle would meet with immigration officials today, but that he didn't know if the uncle would sign the agreement.

Gutierrez charged that INS officials "are following orders either from Clinton's lawyers or Fidel, and they need to answer to the community and to the world."

The INS asked Elián's great-uncle Lazaro González to meet with them today in Miami, at which time government officials said he would be given another opportunity to sign a pledge to give up Elián if he loses the court battle.

If González will not agree in writing to obey the court ruling, the INS intends to advise him on Thursday morning how and when he is to relinquish custody of Elián, according to the government officials, who requested anonymity. They wouldn't say exactly what timetable González would be given on Thursday.

INS spokeswoman Karen Kraushaar read a statement saying the Justice Department hopes that González will sign the agreement today.

"While INS has always had the authority to implement its decision, we have gone to great lengths to bring about a resolution that is carried out in a manner that creates as little disruption for Elián as possible," Kraushaar said.

"The simple assurances we have sought from Lazaro González are that he will cooperate with an orderly transfer of Elián González in the event of an adverse ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals and barring emergency injunctive relief from the Supreme Court," she said.

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**Armando Gutierrez**  
Elián's U.S. family spokesman

Elián, who is living with his great-uncle, is being kept home from school this week. The family spokesman said Elián won't return to school out of fears that Cuba might somehow try to force him back to the island.

Jorge Mas Santos, chairman of the Cuban American National Foundation, a Cuban exile group, said he believes that the government will think carefully before taking any action.

"We don't think the government would forcefully take the child," Mas Santos said. "If they are

ELIÁN SEE PAGE 6

## NAACP: Plan for glass flag cases has potential

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Plans to put authentic Confederate flags and a Union regimental flag in glass cases on the Statehouse grounds have gained some interest from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The group is encouraging tourists and entertainers to avoid the state until the flag comes down from the Statehouse dome.

The NAACP hasn't endorsed the plan, which flag preservation experts have described as risky and expensive for the authentic flags.

"We think that it's a starting point," said James Gallman, president of the South Carolina Conference of Branches of the NAACP.

"There are some questions that need to be answered. If we can get some of the questions answered, we would be willing to sit down and take a look at it."

House Majority Leader Rick Quinn, R-Columbia, said that response highlights the problems with the NAACP's role in the flag debate. Last fall, the NAACP chastised lawmakers and Gov. Jim Hodges for inaction on the Confederate flag. The tentativeness of the group's support bothered Quinn. "They need to show some leadership," Quinn said.

"Those comments don't bother us," said Lonnie Randolph, president of the Columbia NAACP and leader of the

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**James Gallman**  
S.C. NAACP President

nationwide boycott efforts.

The NAACP has said it would lift economic sanctions against the state if the flag, which has flown atop the Statehouse dome since 1962 and in its legislative chambers for decades, is moved to a museum or put in a glass case inside the Statehouse.

Sen. John Courson, a Columbia Republican and flag supporter, and Sen. Darrell Jackson, a Columbia Democrat and flag opponent, have been working together on the glass encasement plan.

That plan puts a square Army of Northern Virginia battle flag in a glass case at the Confederate Soldier monument. The monument stands at the most visible side of the Statehouse, facing north to Columbia's Main Street.

The plan also puts the Confederacy's First National flag, the striped flag with

FLAG SEE PAGE 60

## City council removes flag in Mississippi

JACKSON, Miss. — The Mississippi state flag, which contains the Confederate battle banner, will no longer be displayed in the City Council's chambers.

The council voted 6-0 on Tuesday, with one abstention, to permanently remove the flag.

The flag disappeared from the meeting room in February and hadn't been replaced. Councilman Kenneth Stokes, who is black, acknowledged removing the flag, saying it's racist symbol and offensive to blacks.

A man opposed to removing the flag stormed out of the meeting.

"After you go through the Stars and Bars, the next thing will be the Stars and Stripes," H.O. Walker said.

Calls at the state level to change the flag have largely been ignored.

Rep. Keith Montgomery said that while the City Council has the right to keep the flag out, the move is insulting to the state.

"This is the flag of the state of Mississippi. It should be displayed with the honor and reverence it deserves," the Republican said.

## School bus, train collide, killing 2

BY CHAD ROEDEMEIER  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TENNGA, Ga. — A freight train hauling automobiles tore a school bus off its wheels in a collision at an unprotected rural crossing early Tuesday, killing two children and critically injuring five.

The train dragged the bus' battered yellow body about 100 yards. Some of the children were thrown to the gravel beside the tracks. Others were found bloodied inside.

It "sounded like ... thunder or a bomb blown up," said Joe Brown, who lives about 300 feet from the crossing. He said he found his best friend's daughter among the dead.

John Watson, whose two sons had missed the bus that morning, arrived with the first emergency workers and helped pull one badly injured girl from the wreckage. "I was shocked that she was still alive," he said.

The crash is raising questions once again about the safety of rural, grade-level crossings.

The one-lane crossing, just across the state line in Tennessee, had no warning lights or crossing arms, and the tracks curve through pine trees in hilly terrain, making it difficult to spot trains from the road.

It was unclear if the driver stopped

at the tracks — Georgia law requires school buses to stop at least 15 feet from the tracks before crossing — or took other precautions, like opening the doors to listen for a train.

The engineer told the Tennessee Highway Patrol he "blew his whistle, saw the bus approach the crossing, continued to blow his whistle and put the train in emergency stop, but was unable to stop before striking the bus," Trooper Ken Useton said.

Killed were Kayla Silvers, 6, and Daniel Pack, 9.

The driver, Rhonda Cloer, 34, was listed in fair condition. Of the five injured children, ages 5 to 9, three were listed in critical condition, and two were upgraded to serious. The driver's 5-year-old daughter Kayli was among the injured. No one on the train was injured.

Cloer was driving her regular route for the Murray County school system, picking up children to take them to Northwest Elementary School north of Chatsworth. The bus had just crossed into Polk County, Tenn., to turn around when it was struck about 6:30 a.m.

The train — a 32-car CSX freight hauling Chevy Blazers — spun the bus around, tore its body off its chassis and dragged the wreckage back in-

CRASH SEE PAGE 8

## Gore says Republicans chasing tails on e-mail, IRS questions

BY SANDRA SOBIEK  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Vice President Al Gore said Tuesday the Republicans are chasing their tails pursuing questions about his missing e-mail and staff calls to the Internal Revenue Service, but he offered little additional explanation about either in an interview.

"I hope they spend a lot of time and a lot of energy on this," Gore told The Associated Press with a confident grin.

In a West Wing interview, the No. 2 man in one of the most investigated administrations in U.S. history appeared as untroubled by the newest inquiries as he was vague about their details.

Asked how much he used e-mail during the 1996 re-election campaign to communicate about fund raising, Gore replied simply, "Didn't."

He was pressed to go on: "Just 'didn't'?"

"Well, first of all, I don't know," he responded. "But whatever is there will be disclosed — fully and completely."

Reminded of his reputation as an Internet-savvy person who uses e-mail frequently, he said: "Not about this. First of all, I just don't know. I just don't know. ... They're reconstructing this."

Gore waved the matter off as a red herring inspired by the Republicans. But Ari Fleischer, a spokesman for Texas Gov. George W. Bush, had a different view.

"The problem with this administration is that we've heard all about these red herrings before, but they always turn into additional ethical problems when the truth comes out," Fleischer said.

A Justice Department task force is investigating whether the White House engaged in obstruction by failing to surrender e-mails related to 1996 campaign fund-raising allegations, including Gore's use of White House telephones and a Buddhist temple to solicit campaign contributions.

This week, Rep. Dan Burton, the Republican chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, asked Attorney General Janet Reno to turn the matter over to a special outside counsel.

John McCain echoed the call for an independent investigation when he spoke with Gore on Monday, an aide to the Republican senator revealed on Tuesday. Gore had telephoned McCain, who pressed for campaign finance reform during his suspended presidential campaign, to discuss a speech he was about to deliver on proposed new fund-raising restrictions.

Bush also is making a campaign issue of a recent Joint Committee on Taxation finding that two of Gore's White House aides had improperly attempted to get secret IRS information for a labor union.

On Monday, Bush again pressed Gore to name the union.

"I don't really know," the vice president said Tuesday.

Communications Director Laura Quinn, who sat in on the interview, said aides had scoured "schedules and briefing materials" from the two months surrounding 1997 contacts but hadn't come up with an answer.

The two staffers who called the IRS on Jan. 28, 1997, "have no recollection



of the calls at all themselves," Quinn said.

Gore, asked if he recalled directing aides to contact the IRS, said, "No. No."

Without his knowledge, Gore said, the White House counsel's office had given his aides advice on making requests of the IRS. He blamed any appearance of impropriety on differences in "a kind of body of administrative practice" used by the IRS and the White House.

Whatever his aides had been seeking, "it wasn't a tax return," Gore added.

As for Republicans looking for wrongdoing, "I hope they spend a lot of time and a lot of energy on this," Gore said, leaning comfortably into his armchair.

His confidence belied concern among Democrats that persistent murmurs about scandal will only remind voters of the unwanted catchwords — Whitewater, Travelgate, Filegate and Monica Lewinsky — of Gore's shared tenure with President Clinton. "I don't know where it's going, who's at fault or where the missing e-mails are," Democratic strategist Jim Duffy said. "But none of this is a good story because it ties him right back to the Clinton White House."

And it feeds into Bush's strategy. "The American people are tired of scandals and investigations. The best way to make them go away is to elect someone different," Fleischer said.

## Ugandan officials find another mass grave at home of cult leader

BY CRAIG NELSON  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

RUGAZI, UGANDA — The house of a Christian doomsday sect leader revealed another scene of slaughter Tuesday, as prisoners on a work detail smashed through a concrete floor and discovered a hidden mass grave.

By nightfall, when work stopped, the bodies of 28 people had been unearthed. Many apparently were strangled, some with knotted cloth that still ringed their necks.

More corpses were stuffed, limb across limb, beneath the floor of the 10-by-10 room adjoining the foyer of a home owned by Dominic Kataribabo, a defrocked Roman Catholic priest.

There were fears the house concealed more horrors. As workers wrestled the bodies to the surface with ropes, the thump of crow bars smashing through the floors of other rooms in the 10-room, brick-and-tin roof house echoed as investigators searched for other bodies.

The grisly find brought to at least 591 the number of dead in three compounds set in the lush green hills of southwestern Uganda that once belonged to the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God. On Monday, police exhumed the remains of 74 people from a small field behind Kataribabo's house.

Scenes of horror linked to the apocalyptic sect have followed with nauseating frequency since March 17, when fire

engulfed the chapel of a sect compound in nearby Kahunga.

At least 330 people burned to death in that inferno, which authorities initially called a mass suicide. Within days, investigators discovered six strangled, mutilated corpses in the latrine of the compound, triggering a murder investigation.

Days after the Kanungu fire, 153 more bodies were found buried in a Buhunga village compound belonging to the sect. Police discovered the first Rugazi mass grave Friday, when they came to inspect the Kataribabo's compound.

On Tuesday, forensics experts and investigators from the capital Kampala arrived to unearth the bodies of 74 people exhumed by local officials from a trench in Kataribabo's backyard and reburied only Monday. As the bodies were pulled from the mass grave, a forensic expert performed a quick autopsy and drew tissue and blood samples.

Investigators questioned Kataribabo's neighbors and relatives. His nephew, Bart Bainomukama, led them to the foyer, where there were signs fresh concrete had been poured. Bainomukama told police that his uncle had said he was digging a pit to install an underground refrigerator. A hole driven through the floor quickly revealed the sight of a human leg.

Authorities are pursuing the two main leaders of the movement — Cleodonia Mwerinde and Joseph Kibwetere, an excommunicated Roman Catholic — in connection with the murders.

## Public won't see graphic details in Columbine report

DENVER (AP) — Authorities have decided to release an edited report on the Columbine High School shooting rampage in late May, after consulting with victims' families about the best time to make it public.

Jefferson County sheriff's officials want to minimize additional trauma for the families by editing out graphic details. They also want to avoid releasing the report around the April 20 anniversary of the attack.

The report will be issued in late May on CD-ROM, with about 200 pages of text, and video and audio data, Undersheriff John Dunaway said. It hasn't yet been completely assembled, he said.

"What we are trying to do is create a shared understanding with the nation about this event," Dunaway told a governor's commission on Monday.

## Reno testifies in Branch Davidian wrongful death suit

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Janet Reno testified Tuesday that she never gave approval for tanks to demolish the Branch Davidians' compound near Waco, Texas, say lawyers for the sect who deposed her for their wrongful-death lawsuit against the government.

The Davidians' lead counsel, emerging from the rare deposition of an attorney general, said Reno was less than forthcoming in discussing whether the FBI intended to dismantle the complex during its tear-gassing operation.

"The only issue where we felt that she was less than candid was on the demolition," Houston lawyer Michael Caddell said outside the Justice Department. "The problem that she's got is she testified to Congress in 1995 that the damage done to the building was the result of tear-gas insertion. And I think it's very difficult for her to back off of that testimony."

U.S. Attorney Michael Bradford of Texas, one of five Justice lawyers who flanked Reno at the two-hour deposition, disputed Caddell's claim. "We would strongly disagree with his interpretation," he said.

"She was forthcoming and candid and answered all the questions. Her testimony will speak for itself, but it was consistent throughout the deposition with her past testimony," said Bradford, who is one of the government's chief defenders in the Davidian litigation.

## Satisfied Bush is conservative, Forbes endorses him

MANVILLE, N.J. (AP) — Satisfied that George W. Bush supports conservative positions, Steve Forbes endorsed his former Republican presidential rival on Tuesday as a "good man."

The millionaire magazine publisher threw his support to Bush during an appearance with the Texas governor in Forbes' home state of New Jersey. The endorsement came hours after Bush reached out to resolve another lingering division from the primary campaign by calling John McCain in Washington to discuss a face-to-face meeting.

McCain aides said it was premature to discuss a formal endorsement, but Forbes dropped all of his previous reservations about Bush during a speech to a group of Somerset County Republicans gathered in a VFW hall.

"As the American people are learning and will learn, he is a good man," Forbes said. "He has been tested — I tried to test him — and he emerged the stronger for it."

## U.N. names World Food Program official

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Nations named a World Food Program official Tuesday as its new humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, replacing a German official who resigned to protest the effect of sanctions on the Iraqi people.

The new coordinator, Tun Myat of Myanmar, has worked for the United Nations since 1978 and is currently the director of external relations at WFP's Rome headquarters, U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhardt said.

His predecessor, Hans von Sponeck, was the second humanitarian coordinator in Iraq to quit over the impact of sanctions imposed after Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Denis Halliday of Ireland quit in 1998, saying he didn't want to be associated with the suffering of the civilian population.